

BY LARRY WEST

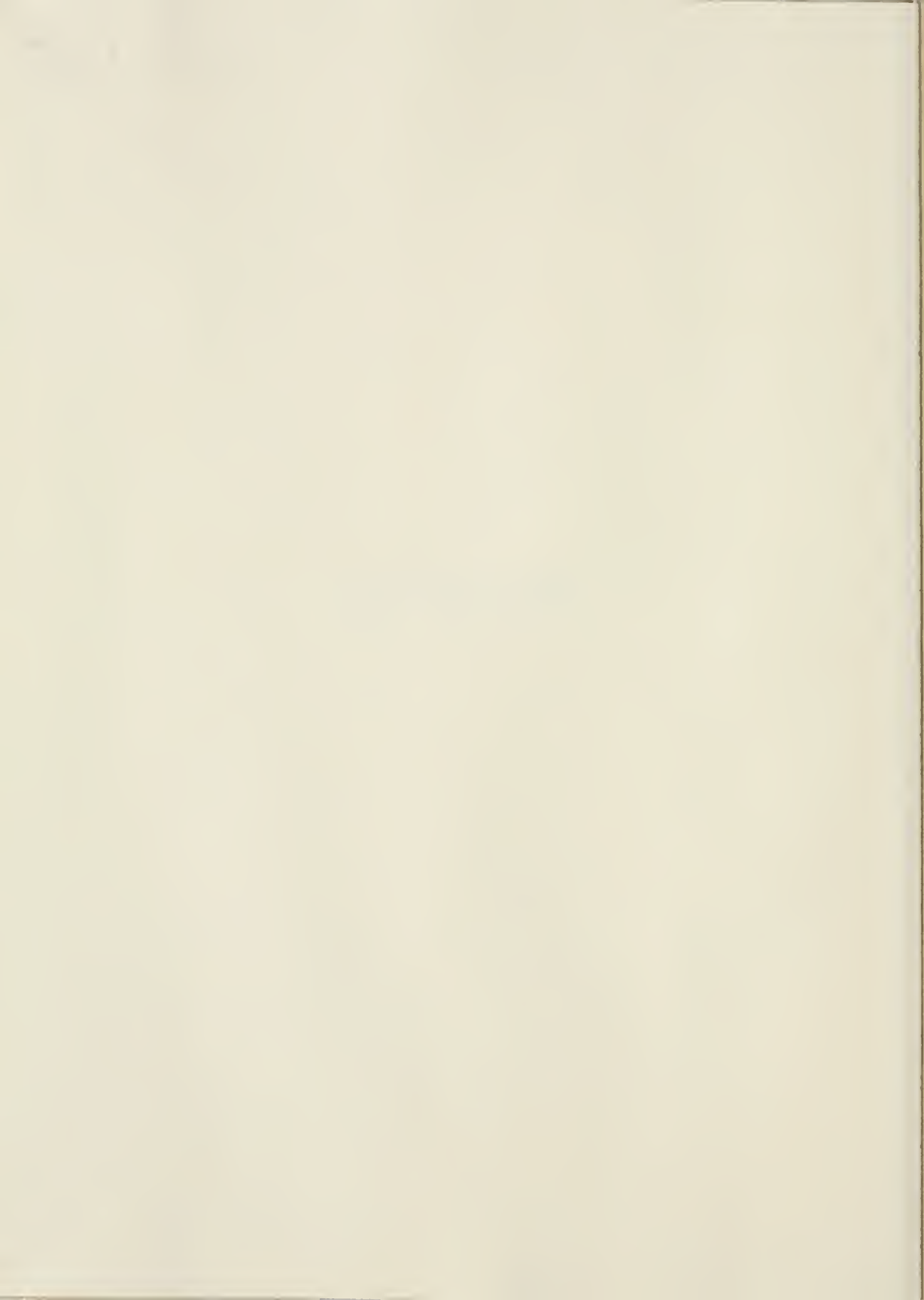
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# A HERITAGE REBORN



ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY





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# **A HERITAGE REBORN**

BY LARRY WEST

First Printing January, 1966



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Larry West, a newspaperman in *A Heritage Reborn*, chronicles the events of the settling of a new frontier by relating the events and legends of the development of Piatt County, Illinois.

West has worked closely with the developers of Pioneer Land of Piatt County and has covered the story of its development since its inception.

In December, 1965, when the developers of Pioneer Land held a special "Roof Raizin'" for the purpose of recognizing those who had contributed greatly to the program, West was accorded the highest honor offered by the organization. He received the honorary Dr. of Heritage Degree from the association.

This work is dedicated to the people of Piatt County, their ancestors and to future generations. May your heritage live on forever.

A special thanks is given Mrs. Glenna Mosgrove of Piatt County, without whose help and research this humble effort to preserve the story of an American Heritage would have been in vain.



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## FOREWORD

When Pioneer Land, Piatt County U. S. A. opened on June 12, 1965, it displayed to the people of Piatt County, Illinois and the nation the rich store of history, legend and folklore abounding in the county.

This book is intended as a summary account of the origins of Pioneer Land and the heritage of Piatt County. Its purpose is to preserve the story of Pioneer Land much the same as the purpose of Pioneer Land is to preserve the story of Piatt County.

This is not a history book. It is rather an account of the efforts and ideals of people without whose untiring advances the people of the United States would not enjoy the freedoms and benefits they enjoy today.

The book is not all inclusive, and does not cover all the early settlers of the county. The writing is not as involved as that of Emma C. Piatt who stated in her "History of Piatt County" written in 1883, that "The writer has spared neither time, trouble nor expense, and in addition to riding 172 miles by rail within the limits of the county, has traveled, by actual count, in a carriage, 883 miles, stopping for neither cold nor stormy weather . . ."

The accounts of early families were neither included nor excluded for the reason Miss Piatt states "Although we advertised in the county papers for personal matter, many we wished to hear from did not reply. Although over one hundred pages have been added that were not promised to our patrons, still we were obliged to cut out some of the personal items. We have endeavored, however, to leave out the sketch of no person who encouraged us to go on with the publishing by agreeing to take one of the books."

I sympathize with Miss Piatt in the problems which she encountered in preparation of her ambitious work. It is hoped that the present reader will find some enjoyment in recounting some of the interesting stories told by the Pioneer Trail and Pioneer Museum.

The accounts and dates are as nearly accurate as information and records of the time deem possible. Although again, this writer did not encounter the same problems that Miss Piatt apparently had to contend with in 1883. She wrote:

"Doubtless some mistakes occur; but our best judgment has been used, and we have conscientiously striven to keep out as many errors

as possible. Since not more than ten men out of every hundred interviewed could give the exact date of their marriage, it will not be strange if some of the dates are wrong. A number of men could not give the number of their children without stopping to count them up. Several would have left out one of their children's names had not the child appeared during the interview. One man averred he had ten children, but upon counting them over time and again, said, 'I guess there are only nine, but I thought there were ten.' "

She continued, "Frequently people are unable to give the names of their married sisters, their grandchildren, and in some cases, their own children. One or two men actually had to study awhile before they could give the names of their own wives. After such answers having been given relating to personal items supposed to be well established in each person's mind, if mistakes occur in this book, they will be the more readily excused, or at least the people will know some of the disadvantages we have labored under in obtaining facts."

Although the present author's sources could remember the names of their offspring, similar problems were encountered and it is hoped that the reader may, from examining Miss Piatt's excerpts, find some degree of appreciation for efforts to bring all accounts into focus with as near a factual basis as possible.

Larry West





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# PIONEER LAND IS BORN

The Pioneer Trail, opened at Monticello, Piatt County, is a route which unveils rich historical attractions covering everything from buffalo wallows to oriental art, log-cabin pioneers to millionaires and with more and more Indian artifacts and authentic Lincolniana proving the pioneer legends.

Pioneer Land is the result of efforts of a group of Piatt County citizens who wish to preserve the heritage of this county and this nation for enjoyment of all people and their children and their children's children for generations to come.

The Pioneers Association, a non-profit corporation which developed Pioneer Land, initiated a project that has become much more than merely another vacation spot or tourist attraction. This industrious group brought to light the massive amount of history, folk-lore and culture in the county. The people of Piatt County have shown the people of the Midwest that they need not travel hundreds of miles to see something beautiful, and they want to show the rest of the country that in Piatt County is unsurpassed beauty, history and heritage.

Piatt County has one of the richest stories of history, legend, art, Indian lore, pioneer authenticity and real appeal to the imagination and fancy of all people to be found anywhere in the Central United States.

The Pioneer Trail is Illinois' greatest 50 miles, as that 50 miles holds more of anything you want to mention than does the entire length of any other trail of tourism anywhere in our land. Private guides are available to those persons wishing to use their own automobiles for a tour of the trail. Guide service for special groups or private tours is also available. Visitors utilizing this service may specify the major area they wish to see—art, Indian lore, nature, the Lincoln section or highlights of the entire trail. A tour of the Pioneer Museum and Heritage Center is a must for all visitors to Pioneer Land.

A nominal fee is charged for tours. All money goes to future development of Pioneer Land. Special events are held weekly. Included are such attractions as outdoor barbecues, Saturday night square dances, and various other pioneer type activities.

Signs on every road entering Piatt County, proclaim a welcome to Pioneer Land and the county. The trail is clearly marked through-

out its entire route for those persons preferring to conduct their own tour. The trail starts at the Pioneer Museum one block west of the square in Monticello. With the exception of a short length of highway, its route is laid out on roads originally surveyed by the first settlers of the area. Included in tours are such attractions as "Millionaire Row," the Slabtown community and mill, Indian ceremonial grounds, a stage line crossing and the largest tree in Illinois.

Lincoln lore is not the least of attractions. Visitors may see the cabin in which Lincoln and Douglas planned their great debates. They may see the mill in which Lincoln worked. They may travel a part of the same route that Lincoln rode as a circuit lawyer. They may see a county line marker erected to the memory of Lincoln and his days in Piatt County.

Ten of the most famous attractions of Allerton Park are part of the Pioneer Trail. Among these are some of the most beautiful art treasures in the world, displayed in a setting that serves to enhance their beauty. Visitors can see the largest Indian burial ground in this area, as well as two of the largest buffalo wallows in the country.

Pioneer Land was conceived in the idea of tradition and heritage. It is a preservation and presentation of the culture, beauty and history contained in Piatt County. Perhaps the philosophy of the conception of Pioneer Land is best summarized by an epitaph inscribed on the tombstone of one of the original settlers:

"He lived that others might enjoy the fruit of his labor. Born early 1767, lived life by the Golden Rule, died a poor man but rich in the reward of self-satisfaction of having left a better land."



## THE PIONEER MUSEUM

The major attraction of Pioneer Land is the Pioneer Museum. The museum houses nine rooms of historical objects and artifacts from throughout the area. The building, which was built by a German casket maker and funeral director, Christian Wengenroth, over a century ago, is in itself a representation of the heritage of the county.

An Indian room houses 8,000-year-old stone urns found in the county. Arrowhead collections and Indian costumes are also displayed. More details of the origin of the ancient artifacts may be found in the latter part of this book.



A Lincoln-Civil War room exhibits a Confederate Flag, valuable letters and documents of the Civil War and many other artifacts, including a drumstick from the Shiloh Battlefield.

A pioneer agriculture room houses a century-old wine press, taken from the only wine cellar in the county and one of the few in this part of the country. Also included are crude plows and implements that helped the early settlers reap the riches of the most fertile farmland in the state of Illinois, topped only by one other area in the United States.

A costume room displays a varied selection of dresses, hats and other articles of apparel worn by the first residents of the county.

A buffalo skull and horns highlights a pioneer room, and in the pioneer kitchen a wooden lemon squeezer never fails to stir interest of visitors to the museum.

In a pioneer bedroom is displayed an antique cord bed along with other old furnishings. The gun that protected the first stage coach in the county highlights the feature room.

Among the many interesting exhibits are the medical tools of Dr. Caldwell, inventor of the famous laxative, Syrup of Pepsin.

The museum was first opened to the public on Sept. 18, 1965. During the first six weeks of its operation, more than 10,000 persons passed through its doors for a look into the past.

Governor Otto Kerner expressed his congratulations to the people of Pioneer Land on their endeavors through a large floral display from him and Mrs. Kerner.

The museum itself was destined to be just the first step in a chain of events leading to tremendous expansion of exhibits and causing Monticello and Piatt County to become the site of the Illinois Pioneer Heritage Center.

More buildings were acquired for a display of more than 50 original carriages, stage coaches and hearses. An international display was arranged. One of the first exhibits for the international division of the Heritage Center was a 15th century Caravelle ship, which is permanently housed in the Casa de Portugal at New York City.

At this writing more responses from various countries from throughout the world were being received by the Pioneer Heritage Center. Expressions of confidence in the program were received. And permanent exhibits were being offered.



Piatt Countys first heated Mail Hack now on display  
at the Pioneer Land Carriage House



Artifacts on display in the Pioneer Land Museum



One may wonder why so much is to be found in Piatt County that cannot be found in other counties in Illinois. One explanation is that the land and personal property of the individuals of the county follow tradition. They have been in the same families for generations and thus a pride in family background and heritage has caused the articles to be preserved. When a proper place to exhibit the articles was made available in the form of the Pioneer Museum, descendants of the original settlers of the county and many others donated and loaned many valuable and rare articles to be shown in the museum so that they may be enjoyed by all. The museum and trail are more than just a preservation of the heritage of Piatt County alone. They are the preservation of the history and beauty that belong to all Americans. Thus with the growth of the trail and museum a center for the heritage of Illinois came into being.

The Pioneer Center is located in the museum. Previously it stood on the site of the first clapboard courthouse in Monticello. Abraham Lincoln made his first speech in Monticello on the second floor of the building in the little court room that was there. Only two people would walk with him through the streets to the speech making. Lincoln talked for two hours in the court room. Before his speech was over the room was filled. One little eleven-year-old boy had tagged along with the two men, and when asked why he did it he said "Oh, just for the devil of it."

A tour of the Pioneer Trail begins at the museum. Among the first sites to be seen along the trail is Lizard Creek which was quite famous with the pioneers and had the reputation of having the longest, greenest and fastest lizards in the Illinois territory. The only lynching that can be proven in Pioneer Land was directly behind the present jail in the old "hanging tree." A man from the small community of Atwood, located south and east of Monticello, went berserk (his name was Wildman) and murdered his wife on July 4, 1886. Mrs. Wildman had been pestering him to go to a celebration in Bement.

After murdering his wife, he sent the children to the neighbors and then went to the orchard and stuck a straight razor in his throat. He was found and brought to the jail with the razor still sticking from his throat. He was kept there until October and was to plead insanity at his trial.

A group of men—none of them known—were hooded and met at



The Hanging Tree

Crows Bridge south of Bement. No one knew each other and each received written orders as to what his part would be. A Mr. Miller was sheriff at the time and the men succeeded in getting Wildman from the jail and hung him from the hanging tree. He was then shot full of shotgun pellets and left hanging. The hooded men rode around the square singing "We're going home to die no more," and rode off to the south. In 1911, one man confessed, and another in later years, to have been a part of the lynching crew, but none were ever brought to trial.

As the reader progresses more accounts and descriptions of the various sites along the Pioneer Trail will be found.



## PIATT COUNTY COMES INTO BEING

A land claim purchased for \$150 in 1829 by James A. Piatt is the beginning of the story of Piatt County. Piatt, for whom the county is named, was born April 21, 1789. He worked in Indianapolis as a tin craftsman and while traveling in Illinois in the interest of his business, first conceived of the idea of locating in what is now Piatt County. He bought the claim for \$150 and paid for it all in tinware, except about \$18. He built the first house in Piatt County and sometime after moving to the place, he acquired more land. He had a corn field fenced on the present site of Monticello.

For a number of years Piatt was the principal man of the Monticello settlement. He bought about 600 acres of land in that immediate vicinity. Piatt's home quickly became a popular way-station for travelers heading West. He acquired the reputation of being one of the most hospitable men in the area and the fame of Mrs. Piatt's cooking spread with the travelers.

"In our travels among the old settlers we heard a great deal about the hospitality of the old times, and we want to take this opportunity to assure the public that the county still retains a great deal of that estimable virtue," wrote Emma C. Piatt in 1883. The same description of the citizens of the county apply as well in 1965.

"In the majority of cases we were greeted cordially by the people,



and many times we were entertained cheerfully in the homes in the county," she continued.

James Piatt did have his unhospitable moments, however. Equally as great as his reputation for friendliness to the friendly was his reputation for perseverance in capturing and punishing the wrongdoers of the area. He spared no energy in tracing down horse and cattle thieves and rarely missed his man. Emma Piatt records that there was a remarkable apprehension on the part of the bad guys to venture into Piatt territory.

It was common practice for settlers to aid one another in the area during sickness or affliction. Occasionally families would travel many miles and leave their own work to go to the aid of a stricken neighbor. Births, deaths and house-raising were all community affairs. An interesting account of early events concerns the coffin tree. There was a walnut tree, which stood on an island a little below the Bender Ford of the Sangamon River, which for 15 years was known as the coffin tree. The first several people who died in the county were buried in coffins made from this tree by the neighbors. Seven coffins were made from the tree as well as a table and several bedsteads.

At the time of the first settlements, what is now Piatt County was a part of Macon and DeWitt counties. About 1837 the people located there began to try to have a new county struck off. Accordingly, a meeting was held to see what could be done to advance the idea. Representatives of the county were sent to the surrounding counties with petitions for getting some portion of these counties for the new county.

Canvassers in Champaign County accomplished nothing, but the others succeeded in getting their petitions filled out, and George A. Patterson was appointed to lobby in the legislature for the formation of the new county. Patterson called a meeting at the house of Abraham Marquiss for the purpose of deciding upon a name for the probable county. Isaac Demorest proposed the name of Webster and made a speech in its favor, while William Barnes proposed that of Piatt, and spoke at length on the subject. Only seven or eight votes were cast and Piatt won by a majority of one vote. The result was that, by an act of the legislature in January, 1841, Piatt County was formed.

After the county was organized, Monticello, which had been laid out and named in 1837, was chosen as the county seat.



## SPIRIT, THEN AND NOW

That the pioneers of Piatt County had spirit and determination becomes quite evident when one examines the early records which relate such events as when the first land claim of Piatt was staked out, Mrs. Piatt rode horseback alone all night from the claim area to Danville to record the claim. The trip in itself was a hazardous journey, but in addition, Mrs. Piatt had to swim the Vermilion River to reach her destination—and she did.

History records that as Mrs. Piatt was walking out of the door of the claim office, having just officially recorded the claim, another fellow, her neighbor, was walking in the door to file a claim on the same land.

That this pioneer spirit of the first settlers has carried over to yet-living residents of the county is shown in at least one man.

E. O. Peck, who can be considered a pioneer in his own right, has been a long-time resident to Piatt County. Peck was 94 in August, 1965, and still actively engaged in farming. For many years Peck farmed 210 acres. But in 1965 he didn't quite think he could handle the load, so he cultivated only 170 acres.

"I would rather work anytime than just have the headache," Peck would explain. "If I had to quit work and sit down, I wouldn't last six months."

Peck farmed land that lies adjacent to the Sangamon River, near Shillings Ford. At one time there was a swinging bridge across the river, constructed for horses and wagons to use.

"I was the first fellow to drive a horse over that swinging bridge," Peck recalled. One fellow made an attempted crossing on the bridge but couldn't quite reach the other side. It seems that the team he was driving shied at the thought of wobbling across the shaky structure. The horses panicked and tossed driver, loaded wagon and all into the river.

But such was pioneering. People of the 1820's even had to contend with price ceilings. A rate ceiling from the "Three Sisters" fort, one of the first in Illinois, dated 1829, shows that for breakfast and a horse feed, the customer wouldn't be charged more than 37½¢; a man and horse overnight could expect to pay 62½¢; dinner and horse feed, 37½¢.





SHIN IN  
BRIDGE



Drinkers could expect to pay 25¢ per half pint for brandy, rum, gin, wine or a cordial. Whiskey or cider brandy brought the high price of 12½¢ per half pint. In order to enter the merchandise business, the aspiring entrepreneur would first have to obtain a license costing from \$3 to \$5.

The fort was an inn for travelers, called the "Three Sisters" because three maidens operated it, cooking and serving food. It was located on one of the highest points in the county near a large buffalo wallow. It was an advantageous spot for defense against Indian attacks and for obtaining buffalo meat.

Not far from the "Three Sisters Fort" was a U. S. Army way-station, near where \$286,000 in gold is supposed to be buried. A back payroll had been delivered to the station when the commanding officer learned there was to be a robbery. Being of enterprising pioneer spirit, he recruited help and buried the gold. However, the fortress was burned and the gold was never recovered, according to historical records. According to government records, none of the gold has turned up in circulation, nor have there been any reported discoveries of the hoard.

The station stood for years, before the attempted robbery, as a resting point, stopping point and payroll point for all the army groups from around Central and Northern Illinois.

It was this same pioneer spirit that led to the development of the first settlements in the county.

## SLABTOWN

One of the earliest settlements of the county was the Slabtown mill and community. The site of the settlement is marked on the Pioneer Trail by the millstones which were used there. Slabtown Cemetery is also a visible reminder of that era long since past.

John Mosgrove was the founder of this early settlement. He was the mill owner, a carpenter, and an associate judge. He came to Piatt County from Kittanning, Pa., in 1848. He built a sawmill in 1852 and added a grist mill in 1855. The town received its name in honor of his uncle who operated Slabtown Mill in Mosgrove, Pa. John Mosgrove also furnished most of the slabs to build the original 71 cabins in the settlement for his workmen. Descendants of John Mosgrove still live in Piatt County.



The millstones of the Slabtown mill are still intact. The duplicates were placed at their present site by Charles A. Mosgrove, grandson of John Mosgrove. The stones were brought to America and then to Chicago where they were transported to the site by wagon, a trip which required six weeks. The stones consist of 16 odd-shaped smaller stones fitted together to form a perfect circle. Each of the finished pieces weighs several hundred pounds. Shot pockets used to balance the top stone are still visible. The misplacement of one shot would throw the stone off balance.

As Piatt County associate judge for two terms, 1853-1860, John Mosgrove was absent only once. He served as judge on Sept. 5, 1854, ordering the new road from Willow Branch Bridge to the south county line. On the second of January, 1860, the county court, consisting of Judge A. G. Boyer, John Mosgrove, associate judge, and Reuben Bowman, coroner, ordered that James Bryden of Monticello, C. D. Moore of Bement, and Ezra Marquiss of Goose Creek be appointed commissioners to divide the county into townships.

Among the many other activities of John Mosgrove, he built the first Masonic Temple in Monticello in 1850. The Piatt County land book records on Oct. 18, 1848, the first purchase of land by John Mosgrove in Piatt County. It was a patent under President Zachary Taylor. Of the 1,278 acres purchased by Mosgrove in 1848-55, he kept only the home place across the road from the sawmill acreage, for as soon as he cut the timber for his mill, he like other pioneers, felt the land to be useless.

A mill book shows sales of wheat flour at three dollars and twenty-five cents for 100 pounds. Buckwheat flour, rye flour and cornmeal were staple products. Mosgrove also sold tallow, candles and baskets. His bedsteads, made at the mill, sold for five dollars and rocking chairs brought two and a half dollars.

From his own resources he also sold bacon, beef, pork, butter and potatoes. During the Civil War the men of the county provided for the families of volunteers. Entries in the mill book show that Mosgrove furnished flour, butter, meal and potatoes and other staples worth some \$86. The mill also carried a supply of quinine, tobacco, sugar, boots and stovepipe. After the entire mill burned in 1859, Mosgrove restored only the sawmill. Debit accounts show he gave his workmen cash to buy their supply of sugar, tobacco and coffee at Kiser's Grocery in Monticello.



Mosgrove gave the acre for Slabtown School in 1866. The United Brethren Church services were held in this log school house. The little building provided quite a contrast for Mosgrove. He had been a member at the Episcopal Cathedral in Louisville, Ky. His parents had given land to the Episcopal Church in Kittanning, Pa., and his ancestors had worshipped in Westminster Abbey, England.

Lumber products sold at the Mosgrove Mill included slabs, sheeting, stringers, sleepers, fencing, fence posts, planks, sills, shingles, rafters and other building products. The mill book records interesting ways of paying for the products. Many farmers brought grain to be ground, then left flour or meal not needed on their lumber bill. Some paid their bills with blacksmith work or by cutting trees.

The mill book index records 204 customers. The quaint spelling agrees with court records in many cases, however phonetics are useful in searching for ancestors whose name may be spelled incorrectly.

The favorite winter occupation for most of the men in the area was whittling oak pegs to be used as nails in homes being built following spring and summer. Salt which was sold at the general store in Slabtown came from a salt well near Possum Trot at Danville.

## THE ALLERTONS

Another of the early settlers of the county was Samuel Allerton. Although he did not have his own town, he was destined to become one of the biggest landholders in the county, and he amassed a fortune which even today is staggering.

In 1889, Samuel Allerton of Chicago was the largest landholder of the county. He owned at that time, 7,160 acres of land, most of which he had improved. Allerton Park, one of the major points on the Pioneer Trail, is a part of the original estate of Samuel Allerton.

Allerton was born in Amenia, N. Y., and went west as a young man, traveling on foot and canal boat to raise cattle in the Midwest. Highly successful, he helped establish banks, stockyards and street railways in Chicago. His son, Robert, took over the full-time management of his father's 12,000-acre farm, and turned it into a showplace of beauty and art. Robert Allerton gave the estate to the University of Illinois in 1946 along with several hundred acres of farmland to provide for its maintenance.



Allerton House, a magnificent mansion, was constructed in 1899-1900. Robert Allerton developed the Monticello homestead into a wonderland of formal and rustic gardening and the mansion was filled with art treasures from all over the world. Famous artists decorated the rooms with murals while sculptures by Rodin, Milles and Bourdelle were given their own settings in the gardens. Although Allerton House is closed to the public, the beautiful gardens are open and free for everyone to enjoy.

Statues of the Sunsinger and the Dying Centaur are main attractions along with the Sunken Garden, Formal Gardens, Lost Garden, Fu Dogs and the Buddhist Temple.

Sunsinger was created by Carl Milles as a tribute to the Swedish poet, Esaias Tegners, and his many works. Sunsinger was first erected in Stockholm in 1926. In 1930 the huge replica was purchased, and brought to the park in 1932. Carl Milles, the sculptor, wrote to Robert Allerton in 1946 and said "Magnificent—the most beautiful setting I have ever seen! I hope that this bronze will stay there in that way 'til the last man has gone—when earth is as dead as the moon—and still this is there."

The Dying Centaur was created by Antoine Bourdelle to symbolize the end of paganism in the world. As he is seen in his death moments and is about to completely expire from life and the earth, the pagan slaves have placed huge urns of wine for him in either direction on the high pedestals, but even that cannot lure the shadow of death from the Centaur. He was sculptured in 1919 in Paris and was purchased from the sculptor in 1929 and brought here by Allerton's adopted son, John Greg.

Sunken Garden is the most beautiful and serene, quiet spot to be found anywhere. Easter sunrise services held in this garden are as beautiful as can be attended anywhere. Sunken Garden was built especially for the enjoyment of Robert Allerton.

In the Formal Gardens are found many different types and colors of flowers and hedges, perfectly landscaped. The beauty of the Formal Gardens, which changes with the different seasons, is unsurpassed anywhere.

Adam was created by Rodin to symbolize the creation of man. The original was bought for the Art Institute in Chicago by Robert



Allerton in 1924. This is a stone copy of the original, but nevertheless quite imposing as the visitor strolls through the garden.

Coming to the Fu Dogs, the visitor to Allerton Park discovers rows of fierce-looking dogs, blue in color, standing atop separate pedestals. Fu Dogs are really a lion highly stylized and the symbol of royalty. They are common on the altars of persons of the Buddhist faith in Chinese homes. Each dog is different in some detail. They stand watch over the House of the Golden Buddha.

The Buddhist Temple, a splendid and beautiful creation in itself, displays on its structure cast iron brought to the park from New Orleans. The intricately styled ironwork dates to the early 19th century. It was made by hand in France and was brought to this country by the early Louisiana settlers. Two gold Siamese Buddhas are from Bangkok, and a stone one from Cambodia. It is of the Brahmin God Hari Hara and represents in one person the preserver of life, Vishnu, and the life destroying force of Siva.

The Lost Garden is a beautiful setting for wonderful works of art hidden deep in the woodlands. One may enjoy its wonders in the quiet and beauty of the woods.

Almost a mile back on the trail through Allerton Park is found one of the largest Indian burial grounds along the Sangamon River and in Illinois. It consists of nine burials. The largest burial is almost 75 yards long and believed to be in the shape of a fish—the fertility symbol of the Indians. The adjoining eight mounds are circular in structure and vary from 10 to 20 yards in width.

Further down the river one may see the Indian Palisades. The palisades still reveal almost 100 yards of the crumbled walls of the Indian fortress remaining, and is about four feet high most of its length. It was apparently constructed for the protection of the Indian burial mounds in the area and built so that any and all intruders could be detained or forbidden entrance to the area.

Allerton pioneer cemetery, not far from the palisades, is one of two cemeteries discovered in this area of the county. One of the men buried there had four wives.

Fellow's name was John West. His wives are all buried in a row of graves beside his own. Perhaps indicative of pioneer life is the fact that the headstones of his wives are all standing straight and solid while the stone of poor old John West lies flat on the ground, shattered.





# LINCOLN IN PIATT

As one delves through the old records and accounts of the first settlers, reads of the Piatts, the Mosgroves and the Allertons, the name of one man always is mentioned. Although he was not a settler, he was still a very important figure in the history of Piatt County. That man was Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln spent considerable time in the county during his circuit riding days. It was also in Piatt County that he encountered Stephen A. Douglas and challenged him to the series of debates during that great senatorial campaign.

With the reader's permission, we are going back to that day in history.

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It is July 29, 1858.

A tall, lean figure approaches a grassy knoll. Another man, shorter and somewhat chubby, approaches the green rise from the opposite direction. The two men stop. They shake hands and begin to converse. An agreement is made—an agreement that will shape the course of a nation.

On that historic day more than 100 years ago, Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas met near Monticello and agreed on their great debates. About one mile south of Monticello is the hill on which Lincoln and Douglas first agreed to debate during their senatorial campaign. A monument erected to the memory of that historical encounter reads: "Here on July 29, 1858, Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas first agreed to meet in joint debate in Illinois."

After both Lincoln and Douglas had spoken in other parts of the state, Lincoln wrote a letter to Douglas formally challenging him to a series of nine debates, one each in the then Illinois Congressional districts.

Douglas reluctantly accepted the challenge, but suggested that, since each candidate had spoken in Chicago and Springfield, the series be shortened to seven. Lincoln accepted the amended program. Lincoln and Douglas met on the highway south of Monticello as each had a speaking appointment in the Piatt County seat of Monticello. The two conferred on the highway where the monument stands. Lincoln then hurried on to Monticello where Douglas had already spoken, to make a speech.

At this point the Francis Bryant cottage in Bement enters the story. The cottage was erected in 1856. Bryant was an intimate friend of Senator Douglas and was deeply interested in the campaign. The slavery problem and threatened secession were hot issues of the race. Bryant invited Sen. and Mrs. Douglas to be his guests the two days they were to be in the Monticello-Bement area. They were his house guests July 29 and 30, 1858.

There was no railroad in Monticello at that time, so it was necessary for Lincoln to return to Bement to take the Great Western train to Springfield. Sources show that on the evening of July 29, Lincoln and Douglas conferred in the Bryant cottage and Lincoln caught the midnight train from Bement to Springfield. The next morning, from the Bryant cottage, Douglas wrote a letter to Lincoln confirming the full schedule of the seven debates to be held throughout the state.

Other details regarding the debates were in the Douglas letter written from the Bryant cottage. Lincoln replied in a brief note from Springfield, dated July 31, and accepted all details. "I accede and thus close the arrangement," wrote Lincoln. The details of the great debates were settled in Piatt County. Even though Douglas won the senatorship, national attention was focused upon Lincoln and this led to his nomination and election as president of the United States.

The chair in which Lincoln sat during his conference with Douglas is still in the Piatt County house. When Lincoln was shot, Bryant tied the Union Flag around the back of the chair along with a piece of black crepe. The chair, the flag and the crepe are still as he left them.

The cottage remained in the hands of Francis Bryant's descendants for more than 90 years. Mrs. Lily Sprague, the last owner of the cottage, with her son, Bryant Sprague, conveyed it to the State of Illinois for a permanent historical shrine.

In 1858 the people of Champaign County gave their support to Lincoln. A long procession of people filed into Piatt County from Champaign County. Some carried such signs as "Cham-Paign for Abe, Real Pain for Dug'."

Even though Lincoln did not receive the support of Piatt citizens in the 1858 senatorial race, he still, as always, managed to make many friends. But he had friends in the county before the senatorial campaign.

A friend of Lincoln founded the village of Farnsworth. Farns-





Bryant Cottage – It was here on July 29, 1858 that Lincoln and Douglas made the arrangements for their historic debates.



The Chair in which Lincoln sat during his conference with Douglas is still in the Bryant Cottage at Bement.





Original Dr. W.B. Noecker home that stood on the  
East side of the public square

worth is, however, no longer in existence. The town is now called Milmine and is another living example of Illinois heritage. The village is the same, though a little smaller than in the past. The historical air and heritage still remain. The original village was founded by Enos Farnsworth.

Farnsworth hailed originally from Clarksburg, Va. He was a friend of Lincoln, having married a Hodgins girl, from the family who owned the land where Lincoln was born. An original picture of Lincoln that dates back more than a hundred years is still in the possession of Farnsworth's descendants. It is not a tin-type or woodcut, but rather a remarkably clear image printed from a glass-plate.

Farnsworth's diary and several other historic documents are still very well preserved. One article dated Sept. 6, 1854, is a clothing store receipt. It contains listings of clothing purchases made by Farnsworth and includes such items as "1 pare pants—\$3.50," "1 pare boots—\$3.25," and "1 pare suspenders—\$.25." In 1853 Farnsworth decided he wanted a town. After having gone to Utah with the Mormons, he heard about the big gold strike in California. Adventurous as he was, Farnsworth set out to strike it rich. And he did! With the money he had retrieved from the earth, he sailed around the tip of South America and up into the Gulf of Mexico, landing in Texas. Farnsworth bought several thousand acres of land in south and west Texas. Most of the land was good for crops—some was only good for oil.

Making his way back to Illinois, Farnsworth acquired considerable land holdings in Piatt County around the area of what is now Milmine. At one time Enos Farnsworth owned most of the land between Milmine and Cerro Gordo. He set aside a part of his land for a town to be named Farnsworth. At that time the area was mostly swampland. Farnsworth founded most of the original businesses in the town.

The town's name was changed to Milmine (after John Milmine) when the post office came. The post office was located in an old country store. At one time, Milmine had a bank, several churches, railroad depot, an implement business, and a blacksmith shop. Gradually the population dwindled. The bank failed during the depression. The railroad depot was moved to Bement. Time eliminated the need for blacksmiths, until today about all that remains in Milmine is churches, about 100 happy residents and a lot of history.



## PLACE OF THE MILLIONAIRES

The fate that was Milmine's was not to be that of Monticello. Monticello, the county seat, a serene, neat and attractive town with tree-lined streets, holds within its quiet atmosphere an avenue of history and permanent remnants of an adventurous past.

That there were at one time more millionaires in Monticello than any other town of its size in the world is a significant fact. Just how this fact ties in with pioneer history and heritage of Piatt County may be determined by recalling that day.

In that era long since passed, call it the "roaring twenties" if you like, there existed an air of elegance and prosperity among the monied. It was an era of gay parties and grand showing of one's wealth. It has been said that there are three things a person can do with his money. He can give it away, play with it, or parade it.

In the era before income taxes and when the cost of living was much lower than it is today, the wealthy did all three of these things with their money. They built fabulous mansions, showplaces that still awe visitors to "millionaire row," gave fabulous parties, and in the end gave up or lost most of their wealth because as time passed they could not afford their "white elephants." Thus begins and ends the era that was built on original pioneer wealth carved out of the rich land in which the earliest white settlers implanted their roots.

Millionaire row was North State Street in Monticello, a street on which many of the wealthy of the town built their mansions and lived.

Among those early wealthy persons was William Dighton who was a lively 92-year-old in 1965. Dighton once mused that "there were five big fools in this town (Monticello): Robert Allerton; Allen Moore and his son, Bradford; John Hott—and William Dighton."

"We made our millions," the spry old gent recalled, "and built our mansions and then could neither maintain nor sell them. John D. Rockefeller once told me the greatest asset a man can have is good character."

Hott House, another showplace of the area, was donated to the University of Illinois in 1960 by Maxwell Hott. The home was built by one of the founders of the present Syrup Pepsin factory during the booming twenties. John Hott, father of Maxwell, was a druggist in



Gracious Living

the 1890's. When Allen Moore bought the Syrup Pepsin business and moved it to its present location, he took John Hott into partnership as sales manager. The business thrived and so did its owners. Hott became one of the richest men in town, dealing in farmland on the side and also entering the banking business.

With an eye on the home of his partner and the older residence of William Dighton, Hott engaged the same architect to design a home for himself. He purchased ground from the former sheriff, W. H. Plunk, on which to build. The house is famous for its tall pillared porch and floating staircase.

Upon the death of his parents, Maxwell Hott moved into his father's big house, until, he could no longer staff it for proper maintenance.

Kirby Hospital was once the home of one of the most famous of all Monticello's wealthy citizens. Allen F. Moore, son of an early banker, purchased the land where the hospital now stands in the late 1920's and built a mansion to rival Robert Allerton's. It was complete with golf course, tennis courts, swimming pool and greenhouse on the grounds. It had a regulation bowling alley and billiard room in the basement. The story goes that a carload of clay was imported from China to lay the surface of the tennis courts.

Before the market crash and failing health caused him to leave Monticello for the Southwest, Moore donated the funds for a new gymnasium for the Monticello High School. In 1940, Mrs. Nellie England, widow of another wealthy citizen, donated funds from the estates of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Kirby, to the community for the establishment of a hospital. Combining this money with that raised from a bond issue, the community purchased the Moore home for \$35,000 and converted it into its present hospital facility. Mrs. England was the first president of the hospital board of directors. Upon her death, she left most of her farmland for support of the hospital.

Yes, Monticello was a rich little town at one time—and still is today. Although there may be a little less money in circulation, there are still the stories, the memories, the heritage. The farmland that made the town so rich is no longer available for the nominal sums or homestead rights. It takes a rich man to buy it now.

Millionaire row is one of the first sights on the Pioneer Trail. On the next few pages we shall resume that tour farther along the trail.



## OVER THE BRIDGE AND THROUGH THE WOODS

Further along the Pioneer Trail, passing the Slabtown site, coming to the Sangamon River, a bridge made of steel now marks the site of an old covered bridge on the river, known as Bobcat Bridge, built about 1860. The old bridge got its name (also Marquiss Bridge) because of the large number of bobcats that once roamed the Sangamon River bottoms. Some are still occasionally captured today.

On several occasions the early pioneers, and even less than 20 years ago, residents of the area driving across the bridge in automobiles have experienced bobcats jumping from the bridge onto their auto tops to protest man being in the domain of the cats. No one was ever severely injured by the wild cats, but many were scared out of their wits.

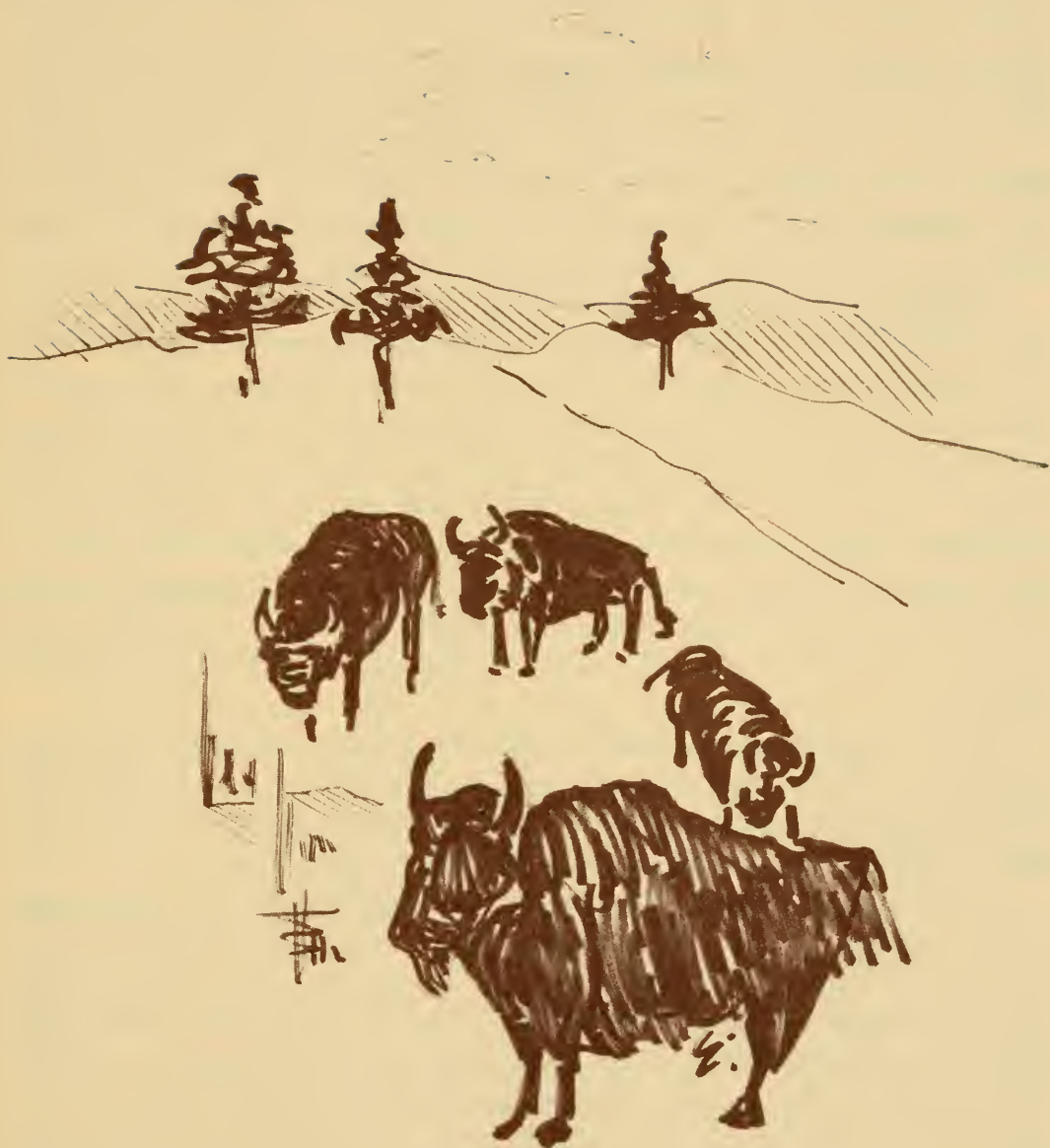
Along the high river banks to the north for more than a quarter of a mile can be found the relics, arrowheads, Indian pottery, and other artifacts to prove the location of the largest Indian ceremonial grounds in this area. The high bluffs were used for the ceremonials along the river so the Indians could dance and celebrate in some degree of safety by being able to watch the river and the plains at the same time.

Up along the river bank is what is believed to be the largest tree in Illinois. The river below the tree was used by the pioneers and their children as a swimming hole and for years on end the children growing up along the Sangamon have used it for their secret hiding place to watch the large turtles and the fish play in the river which abounds with both. The tree is several hundred years old.

Coming out of the flood plain of the Sangamon the trail progresses past Madden Run and Madden Run Cemetery, two extremely interesting locations in relation to early history. One may see tombstones in the cemetery dated 1818 and 1821 both of which were before the first recorded white settlers in Piatt County. Other stones reveal the early origin of the settlers in the area. Madden Run Creek got its name from the early pioneer Madden family in the area. The 1818 tombstone marks the grave of a Madden child.

Also on the trail are buffalo wallows—two of the largest in America. Water still stands in a part of the wallows. A great many skulls and skeletons are still found in the area. The huge buffalo





herds once came to the wallows to drink and to wallow in the mud. The mud would coat them so that the flies and mosquitoes could not penetrate the skin. The great snow of 1830 killed a large portion of the herds in the area. It was hard on the Indians as well as the early pioneers because of the great reduction of food and fresh meat supply. The snow, which was more than seven feet deep on the level and frozen solid, stayed on for the entire winter. It was the greatest and worst snow in the history of Pioneer Land and Illinois. It is recorded that the pioneers here could drive their wagons and horses on the snow crust, as it was so hard and the weather so cold.

The Ingram Cemetery is another of the very early cemeteries in the county and it reveals very interesting epitaphs. Also, the first white child born in the county is buried in this cemetery. The grave is plainly marked. The road on which the cemetery is located is the same route that Abraham Lincoln rode during work as a circuit lawyer. He stopped at almost every house along the way and visited with the children. They were always amazed and enthusiastic about his stories, yarns and things he related to them that he had learned from his law books. Every child along the way knew him and the excited screams of "here comes Abe again," could be heard when he was in the area.

Near the first school built in the county is a county line marker erected in 1922 to the memory of Lincoln by some yet-living Piatt residents who, as children, were friends of Lincoln. The marker designates the line between Piatt and Champaign counties.

Just north of the marker, still on the circuit route, is another large buffalo wallow. Time, the draining of the area and agriculture have altered its appearance somewhat, but it is still quite obvious where the great herds lay and wallowed in the mire. The Fort of the Three Sisters was situated on a small rise not far from this wallow. Back in the woods near the wallow were several large ant hills. There are still some hills in the area and several along the Sangamon bottoms. Many of them are as much as seven feet in diameter and have millions of large red ants as tenants. It was on these very ant hills that many men were put to the stake to be eaten alive by the ants. The Indians had their own ways of rendering justice.

On another bridge over the Sangamon is an Indian burial. Over a hundred years ago the river ran in a straight line. A large Indian burial mound was on the bank. As the river began to change its course

and erode the bank in the 1860's, several Indian skulls and heads were revealed. The river uncovered the heads of seven Indian women and the hair hung down almost six feet long and flowed in the breeze over the river.

Pioneers of the day claimed that the breezes in the evening blowing through the hair made it possible to hear the ancient Indian songs. It is claimed the songs can be heard yet today.

The pioneers always told of the smog that would set in on the area in the late evening and claimed that it was the smoke from the many Indian camp fires in the area. Legend is legend but the haze over that particular area of the river can still be seen in the early evenings.

Along the river banks was the site of the largest permanent Indian encampment in Central Illinois. It was home to the squaws, old men and children while braves were out looking for food and making preparations for defense of the homes. The area abounds with Indian relics and artifacts to prove sites of inhabitation.

The remains of the first old log covered bridge which crossed the upper Sangamon River is another part of the trail. The bridge was presumably built by the settlers at the Three Sisters Fort area to provide easy access to Lick Skillet.

Lick Skillet, now called Centerville, was named by the U. S. Post Office Department in 1958. The town received its name from the village innkeeper who allowed dogs and cats of the community to lick the dishes and pots at the inn. This was the object of great amusement to Abraham Lincoln who was a frequent visitor to the pioneer community. It was also the object of great discourse among the townspeople. Lick Skillet was a very fine industrial area of the day. It sported a half-mile race track, three general stores, three doctors, two blacksmiths, a farm implement store, two churches, a school, a saloon and several mills for grinding grain and sawmills for sawing lumber.

It was this community that Abraham Lincoln first approached as the possible state capitol of Illinois. Lincoln wanted the community as a capital because it was a fine progressive area and was about to receive one of the very first railroad lines in the area. The townspeople met and voted on the proposition of the railroad coming to town and unfortunately rejected it.

In less than a year the town lost the railroad because one of the pioneer settlers refused to sell right-of-way property across his land claim to the railroad. When this happened, the progressive little





Legend of the Singing Hair



pioneer community of White Heath received the rail line. Over half of the 400 inhabitants of Lick Skillet moved to White Heath and Lick Skillet started its descent. Lick Skillet is still, however, rich in history, legend and tradition.

Another of the early settlements, Lodge, is today the only community in America which has a bridge across the entire span of town. It was also at one time a large and prosperous pioneer community. A story told by the townspeople had it that a great tornado destroyed almost two-thirds of Lodge. It not only razed the town but it carried the church bell from the Lodge church all the way to Lick Skillet and deposited it in the church yard there with only slight damage to the bell.

The wind, according to the pioneers, "harmed nary a stick in Lick Skillet, but sure played havoc with Lodge."

An area along the Sangamon not too far from the town of Lodge is known as Lodge Park. In Lodge Park, visitors see beautiful Buck's Pond.

The legend of Buck's Pond relates that on a green hill side overlooking a still pond in a wooded area of the county, in what is now Lodge Park, the old Indian chief Buck lived with his wife.

They had been banished from their tribe and were forced to live alone. The Indian maiden had killed two babies and had been sentenced to die by stoning. According to Indian law the only way she could be saved was for a warrior of the tribe to marry her. Buck married the maiden to save her and set up his home on the hill overlooking the pond.

The story has it that another tribe discovered the grave of the maiden on the hill where Buck had later buried her, and had taken her bones and scattered them all about. Later white settlers supposedly buried the bones in a secret grave so that her soul might rest in peace. A stone marker on the hill marks the approximate site of the grave.

Behind the burial marker — and back in the woods — Pioneer Land guides show the remains of quite a large Indian burial site. Even today deer are quite prevalent in the area and some of the herd that lives in the area may still be seen.

One may also see log cabins in their original and unchanged setting. Unlike many other places that feature log cabins, these are

real and stand where pioneers built them over a hundred years ago. The selection of location of the cabins, on a high wooded hill, has great advantages. Protective views of the surrounding countryside as well as easy access to the stream below made pioneer living a little more enjoyable. In most real log cabin settings, the settlers liked to be close to water, yet in a good vantage point for their safety.

Down the trail from the cabins, visitors see Benders Ford, site of the first ferry boat service across the Sangamon River. Benders Ford was a part of the old stage line trail which later moved to the south near Skillings Ford. The river's course is the same today as it was then.

The river holds many stories. One such is related by the pioneers that Abe Lincoln was thrown from his horse by the river currents on one of his many trips from Monticello to Clinton on the old stage line trail. Before the ferry came, fording was a necessity and this location was picked because of its swift but shallow water.

Skillings Ford was the location picked for a new ferry boat crossing which provided much easier access to Monticello for the pioneers after that community was established in 1837. The City of Monticello made a deal with the ferry owners that the city would provide the cable for the ferry and would buy the boat should a bridge be built across the river within five years after the move. The cable cost the grand total of \$3.17. This action moved the stage line trail, which can still be seen, down to the river and to the west up a ravine and out toward the pioneer communities of DeLand and Clinton.

## BEFORE THE WHITE MAN CAME

Were there inhabitants of the Central Plains in the area now known as Piatt County 10,000 years ago? An extensive archeological survey conducted by the Illinois State Museum in the spring of 1965 uncovered evidence to support the thought that Indians lived in this part of Illinois in the year 8,000 B.C.

The expedition was initiated to analyze Indian village and burial sites that might be flooded when the Oakley Reservoir Project was completed. With the completion of a dam, water on the Sangamon was to be backed up several miles, forming a lake.

A total of 81 aboriginal and 17 prehistoric sites were found. Dr. C. G. Holland, of the University of Virginia conducted the survey.

"The camps are not concentrated in one time horizon," Dr. Holland said. "Rather they were occupied from early archaic to late woodland periods. If the 81 aboriginal sites represent one one-hundredth of the total number of sites, there were only one or two camps in the area for each year of time."

One of the most interesting sites is a group of mounds in Allerton Park which, according to Dr. Holland, is associated with a yet-to-be-discovered village. Artifacts known as clovis points were discovered in a collection from the county. Clovis points are dated back to the year 8,000 B.C.

A total of 46 sites in Piatt County were recommended by Dr. Holland for excavation in his report to the National Park Service. The most common sites are aboriginal sites which have been called "camps," usually containing chips, anvils and a certain amount of unidentifiable residue. The Allerton Park excavation was recommended for two aboriginal structures—the palisade and a group of mounds overlooking the Sangamon. Both these sites may be seen by visitors to Pioneer Land on their tours of the Pioneer Trail.

One supposed site where nothing was found was referred to in a newspaper item dated 1900. It stated that "there are a number of Indian mounds there (in a part of the county). Once a man started to open one mound but took sick. The Indians had died of cholera and this man's symptoms were similar to that dread illness, after which no one ever went near the mounds."

One site of occupation in Allerton Park revealed an archaic camp. At the center of the site, which was ten yards in diameter, there was a group of fire cracked stones which appeared to be the remains of an ancient fireplace.

Apparently, Indian life will always be a subject of great interest, as it has been in the past.

"The Indians are sociable creatures," wrote Emma C. Piatt in 1883. She says their living together, many families in one cabin, and the collecting of houses into towns, proves this statement. Polygamy was allowed, but there was an unwritten law in regard to who should marry. An Indian could not marry his own kinfolks, those who used the same totem or family symbol, but his wives could bear the closest relationship. The marriage ceremony consisted of the groom making a few presents to the bride's father.







If the presents were accepted, the contract was complete, and for a time the husband lodged with his wife's family. Divorces were allowed, and the marriage tie could be severed as easily as it was made. When divorces occurred, the mother, of necessity, claimed all the children. If a mother died, the baby shared her grave. Thus she alone had care of the baby in death even as in life.

No restraint whatever was put upon the Indian children. They, by exposure, became hardy. The Indian boy learned to be courageous by hearing the daring tales of Indian exploits told around the wigwam fire. The bow and arrow were among his first playthings, and he early heard the war song, and its purport soon was recognized.

The young Indian looked forward with joy to joining, for the first time, in the war-dance. While the Indian boy, from the example of his elders, thus became a warrior, and learned to be proud of idleness, in like manner the girl learned to be a drudge. By the white man's standards, the wife was but a slave.

The Indian's idea of a supreme being was very indefinite. He saw a spirit in everything and recognized it in every action and in every object. Yet they believed in the Great Spirit. The Illinois worshiped a god under the name of Manitou, and this they found in every animal.

The medicine man boasted of a power over the spirits, and was a sort of magician. The Indian had great faith in his subverting every evil and curing all ills. The waking Indian recognized his dreams as glimpses into the invisible world. It was thus he received messages from his god. They professed no fear of death and believed the dead still lived. They, therefore, buried with them their earthly belongings.

The superstitions among the different Indians of the United States are various. Some of the southern tribes, upon the death of a lord or chief, killed two finely formed Indians that they might act as servants to the lord of shadows and death.

Festivals were often held in honor of the dead. Some of the tribes every few years gathered and cleansed the bones from their various burial places, and amid their solemn ceremonies, buried them in a common grave. All over America, the Indians practiced placing the dead in a sitting posture for burial.

Early accounts have it that the red man imitated rather than invented. He equaled the white man in acuteness of the senses, but his moral and reasoning faculties were considered inferior. Even

though the Indians had no great composers among them, they all recognized music and danced with grace to their wild melodies, and the decoration on their clothing and bodies was harmonious and sometimes elegant.

They were referred to as "cruel," yet they never invented the thumbscrew nor the boot, or the rack, or broke on the wheel, or exiled bands of their nations for opinion's sake. They protected the monopoly of the medicine man by the gallows or the block or fire.

There was not a quality belonging to the white man which did not also belong to the American savage. There was not among the Indians a rule of language, a custom, an institution, which, when considered in its principles, had not a counterpart among their conquerors, the white man.

## HORSES: THE PIONEERS' POWER

Horses were among the most valuable of possessions of the pioneers. They were sources of transportation, power for work and recreation. The largest horse-raisers of the era in Piatt County was the Caldwell Family. A large area of land near Lick Skillet was set aside by the family where stock yards were built. The Caldwells shipped horses throughout the new pioneer territory and to the West. Lick Skillet was also the site of the first quarter horse races in the area. This type of recreation was a favorite among the pioneers.

In continuing that pioneer tradition, a Pioneer Land Race Track was opened on June 20, 1965, in Piatt County. The track was intended as a continuance of the heritage of the early settlers and quarter horse races were run exclusively at the track.

Quarter horses are a proud breed. Owners say the quarter horse is the world's greatest all around horse. All racing records up to and including a quarter mile are held by registered quarter horses. No other breed of horse has ever won the contest staged annually by the National Cutting Horse Association to select the world champion cutting horse, a contest open to all breeds.

The quarter horse was instrumental in the winning of the West. In that boisterous, dangerous period of history he demonstrated the superiority he had as a means of transportation, a weapon of war against marauding Indians, and as an implement of peace.

Quick and agile, brave yet docile, the quarter horse found warm friends and a permanent home among cowboys. Retaining his po-

tential for speed, intelligence and hardiness, he became known in cattle country for his innate "cow sense." In the vast movement of trail herds to pasture and market, some said that "a good horse was better than a good man."

Experienced horsemen believe that the inherent love young people have for animals should have no better outlet, no more logical and satisfying object, than a good horse. Whatever the reason, young people are eagerly joining adults to have fun with horses. Perhaps young and old alike sense the philosophy once expressed by a weather beaten pioneer who observed that "a man on a hoss can look down on everybody that's afoot."

The animals that are filling the growing demand for western riding and competitive stock are almost exclusively quarter horses whose genesis goes back 334 years, the date the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth. It was then that mares imported from England were crossed with stallions descended from horses brought to this continent by Spanish explorers. The cross produced a compact, relatively heavy muscled horse that could run a short distance with dazzling speed. The original name, Celebrated American Quarter Running Horse, was shortened to Quarter Horse.

It was not until 1940, however, at a meeting in Fort Worth, Tex., of men and women from several states and Mexico that a registry was formed to record and preserve the blood lines of the quarter horse.





## PIONEER LAND: ITS IMPACT

The impact of Pioneer Land reached many persons during its first days of operation. As each day passes, more and more visitors come to see, to enjoy, to learn. Governor Otto Kerner was one of the first to commend the people of Pioneer Land for their efforts.

In a proclamation he wrote:

"The people of Piatt County have decided to bring together into a comprehensive pattern the rich heritage in their county so everyone, everywhere, may enjoy the area named Pioneer Land of Illinois and America.

"Whereas the people of Piatt County working cooperatively in a self-help program by the promotion of their Pioneer Land enter with fervor into the spirit which 'will put Illinois well on the road to success in promoting tourism as a major industry in our state.

"Now, therefore, I, Otto Kerner, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby commend the people of Piatt County for the unselfish effort they have put forth to provide a place of education and enjoyment for all people and I congratulate them and wish them the best of luck in their enterprise."

Yes, the impact of Pioneer Land was great. It was the impact of people, of a heritage. It was the impact of stories — both fact and legend — of art, Lincoln, log cabins, millionaires and even horses.

It is the retelling of the history and heritage that belongs to everyone. It is a Heritage Reborn. When this, our present generation has passed and when our children's generations have all passed — this, our heritage shall remain!

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